

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Currently amended) A method of evaluating the efficiency of a sterilization process, ~~which comprises the steps of~~ comprising:
  - a) subjecting a sufficient amount of at least one prion protein degradation indicator in a container to said sterilization process; and
  - b) determining the level of degradation of said indicator,wherein said indicator ~~of step a)~~ is transcribed by a gene ~~naturally occurring in a fungus selected from the group consisting of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, and *Podospora anserina*~~ selected from the group consisting of SUP35, URE2 and HET-s.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein said indicator is selected from the group consisting of Sup35p, Ure2p, Het-s protein, and combination thereof.
6. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 3, wherein said indicator is a purified ~~form~~ naturally occurring form in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, *Podospora anserina* or a fungus, a recombinant form, an analog, a mutant, or a fragment of said indicator thereof, wherein said indicator is insoluble in non-ionic detergents, partly resistant to proteases' action, and forms abnormal amyloid filaments composed of  $\beta$ -sheets.
7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein said indicator is a biological indicator, a biochemical indicator, or a chemical indicator.
8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein step b) is performed by determining the weight or the mass, quantifying radicals, colorimetric variations, radiometry, nephelometry, immuno-enzymatic method, Western blotting, dot blotting, radioimmuno assay, circular dichroism, electron microscopy, fluorescent microscopy, FTIR, Congo red binding, or proteinase digestion.

9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein said sterilization process is performed by autoclaving, chemical exposure, dry heating, low temperature plasma gas, ozone-based exposure, or sterilization techniques using alkylating and/or oxidizing sterilizing agents.
10. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein said chemical exposure is a vapor or a solution selected from the group consisting of detergent, ethylene oxide, protease, sodium hydroxide, and enzyme.
11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein said amount of indicator of step a) is between 0.1 ng to 100 g.
12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein said container is of a material selected from the group consisting of paper, glass, borosilicate, metal, polymer, alloy, and composite.
13. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein said container is porous, permeable, or semi-permeable.
14. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein said indicator is a purified form naturally occurring in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* or *Podospora anserin*.
15. (New) The method according to claim 6, wherein the fragment comprises:
  - a) the first 759bp region of Sup35 encoding the peptidic region,
  - b) the region coding for the first 114 amino acids of SUP35; or
  - c) the first 639 nucleotides of Sup35.